

1 SEX INDUSTRY BIZ NEWS

1.1 Evidence collection in sexual violence case

It is not uncommon that sex workers come across sexual violence at work, which may include rape and forced anal sex.

According to Hong Kong Law, “a man commits rape if- (a) he has unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman who at the time of the intercourse does not consent to it; and (b) at that time he knows that she does not consent to the intercourse or he is reckless as to whether she consents to it.” And, “a person who commits buggery with another person who at the time of the buggery does not consent to it shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for life.”

As for sex workers, some common sexual violence cases include:

- A client purposely removes the condom during intercourse and forces the sex worker to continue vaginal sex without her consent.
- A client forces to carry out vaginal sex or anal sex with a sex worker who has only agreed to perform oral sex for the client.

If a sex worker has been sexually abused and decides to report the case, it is advised that she takes action as soon as possible. The investigation procedures of sexual offenses are as follows:

At the scene

- Uniformed Branch Officers will arrive at the scene followed by detectives if appropriate.
- You should preserve the scene of crime. If a rape has just occurred, do not wash yourself. If it was unavoidable that you have wiped or cleaned yourself, do not discard any tissues or cloths you may have used. If you have changed your clothes, do not discard or wash the clothes you were wearing during the attack.
- Medical services and Social Welfare intervention will be arranged if required. An officer of the same sex will accompany you to the Forensic Pathologist if necessary.

- The police photographer of the same sex may take photographs of your injuries with your consent.
- You should try to recollect any useful information such as the appearance of the assailant or any items left by the assailant and pass it on to the police.
- Scene of crime experts may attend the scene, collect fingerprints, take photographs and obtain forensic evidence if necessary.

Follow up enquires:

- You (and other witnesses if available) will be invited back to police station to give a statement to assist in our enquiries. You will be interviewed by an officer of the same sex.
- You may be invited to assist in composing a drawing of the suspect or in viewing photographs of suspects if necessary.
- With your consent, you will be referred to the Social Welfare Department in order that you may receive their specialized crisis intervention and after care.
- The officer in charge of the investigation will maintain contact with you and inform you of the process of the investigation and any significant developments. If you have any fresh information, do not hesitate to inform the investigating officers.

Arrest of a Suspect

- When an arrest is made, you may be required to attend an identification parade if you have seen the suspect (a one-way mirror identification parade room can be used if required).
- In case of prosecution, you may have to attend court and give evidence. You may request that your identity be protected.
- You should be notified about the case result or progress of the investigation in due course.

(Reference: Advice to Persons Reporting Crime from the Hong Kong Police Force)

We understand that you may worry about the possibilities of contracting STDs, and therefore may want to wash your body as soon as possible after the attack. Yet, no matter how long or how short the semen stays inside your body, STDs transmission is still possible once there is a contact. Therefore, in order to put the criminal in jail, you should stay calm, and allow the police to collect relevant evidences.

Meanwhile, bear in mind that sometimes a condom may slip off accidentally. Both a client and a sex worker have the responsibility to watch closely and make sure that a condom is properly put on, used and removed. Accidents are unpredictable. It is advised to a sex worker always puts on and remove a condom for her client, so as to give herself maximum protection.

2 WORK REPORT

2.1 February Tea Gathering: BBQ gathering for the Chinese New Year (19 Feb)

19 February, the 17th day of the Chinese New Year, was with “rain water”, according to the Chinese Lunar calendar this year. And it was on that day that we had our barbeque gathering.

Unfortunately, it was really rainy and chilly all the day. 31 persons joined the barbeque in Yuen Long, including sex workers, their children and friends, AFRO’s volunteers and staff.

Nevertheless, we were not let down by the gloomy weather; instead we sat around the warm fire, chit-chatted and had some very good time!

3 FUTURE WORK

3.1 The 4th Hong Kong Sex Cultural Festival 2011 (13 March)

AFRO would hold a booth and share with the public more about sex workers, the sex industry and our work. Please feel free to drop by!

Date: 13 March 2011 (Sunday)

Time: 12noon - 5pm

Venue: HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity

3.2 □□□ March Tea Gathering - Legal Information

A lawyer will come and explain to sex workers relevant legal information and general legal procedures in Hong Kong. Please feel free to call us at 2770 1002 for enquires and seat reservations.

Date: 28 March 2011 (Monday)

Time: 3:15pm

Venue: AFRO Drop in Centre

Fee: Free

4 NEWS READING

Sex Workers Turn To Facebook To Recruit Customers

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/09/sex-workers-facebook- n 820345.html>

2011-2-9

Wired recently published the results of a multi-year study, that examined the increasingly prominent role of social networking and mobile technologies in the lives of New York sex workers.

The study, conducted by Columbia sociology professor Sudhir Venkatesh and titled "How Tech Tools Transformed New York's Sex Trade" examined 290 women for at least twelve months. All these women worked in Manhattan while in contact with Venkatesh.

Of the participants, 83 percent said they maintain Facebook pages for recruiting customers, compared to the 61 percent that said they had advertised on Craigslist. The study also found that Facebook has become increasingly popular among sex workers since it launched in 2004. Wired reports that by 2008, sex workers received 25 percent of their regular clients through the social network.

As Facebook's prominence rose, the role of more traditional client pools--such as escort agencies, strip clubs, bars, hotels and clubs--diminished slightly. Furthermore, Craigslist, which supplied sex workers with 9 percent of their clients in 2003, had become 6 percent less reliable by 2008, Venkatesh reports in the study.

Facebook's relative popularity among sex workers may be partially attributable to the site's somewhat vague user policy. "Currently, Facebook's terms of use do not explicitly ban the solicitation of sex, though there is a blanket ban on unlawful activity, and prostitution is currently illegal in every U.S. state except Nevada," Geekosystem notes. By contrast, Craigslist has attempted to take a firmer stance against prostitution and, in 2010, dropped its adult services section.

Venkatesh's study also found that many sex workers preferred to carry more than one cell phone. Among those who chose smartphones, 19 percent preferred to use an iPhone. Far more popular are BlackBerry devices, which were the smartphone of choice 70 percent of the women participating in the study. "To clients," writes Venkatesh, "this symbol of professional life [the BlackBerry] suggests the worker is drug- and disease-free."

Comments:

It is interesting to see the rise in social networking and smart phones has transformed the way of doing business, which allows sex workers to become more independent, and have more autonomy to choose their clients and ways to do business.

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